

Oral history with 77 year old female, Grand Junction, Colorado (Transcription)

I remember we both were going down to the Cowpuncher's Reunion. You didn't want to go to the Reunion, you wanted to go home, you was homesick. <gap> went the day before. You got a horse and you let school out early. It was raining when we left home

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(F.U.) and I kept saying, <gap> let's go back." Because we both had on linen hats and they were starched stiff, and they got wet and hung down in front of our eyes and we couldn't see. I kept saying, "Let's go back." And you'd say, <gap> I'm so homesick I just can't go back." And I said, "Well, what will people think of us being out in the rain and going in looking like this?" And when we got down to what was called "300" it was raining harder, and you said, <gap> let's go back." And I said, " I won't go back, <gap> I don't care what happens, you've made me come this far and I'm not going back!" That horse you was riding was lazy and once in a while he'd groan and you said, <gap> what's the matter with this horse?" And I didn't think it was anything but I was so mad at you that I said, "Well, I think he'd going to die." (laughter) You said, "What do you suppose they'll charge me if the horse dies?" You was really worried. I said, "At least 80 dollars." I was just so mad because you wouldn't go back. (laughter) We kept a-going and you was worried and once in a while that horse would go "ur-r-r-r" like that. When we got down there we were a sight to behold! <gap> came to the bridge, do you remember? He met us at the bridge and he said, "I didn't think you'd come in the rain." I said, "Well, it was her, I didn't want

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to." (laughs) You got on the interurban and you went home. And then you came down on Sunday ...or I don't know when it was (laughter) and we all went up horseback. Well, that's one of the stories..... Another time was when we went down to get that music box. Herman went down and sent word up by somebody for us to meet these Weavers. He said, "I'm sending..." what was it, a gramophone? Is that what they call it? It was a hundred and some records. They were these disc records, you know, and she carried

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(E.R.) that big wooden box....and she'd carry that box in snow up to our knees and we was wet to our waists. I'd say, "Aren't you nearly dead?" And you'd say, "No, I'm just so tickled to get these." When we got there you said, "Now you get supper and I'll play these." And we stayed up til two o'clock in the morning and played every one of those records. (laughs) And the ones we liked best we played a second time. (laughter) Do you remember?

F.W. (laughing) Oh, my yes!

E.R. And then one night there was a storm come up and the wind was blowing and it was raining and it blew the window out. The rain was just coming right in on our bed. <unintelligible text> there with a big comfort in her hands holding it up in the wind against the window and we stayed there two hours. We'd take turns holding that comfort up there. The wind was blowing terribly and it was blowing right in our faces. But there was a lot of things Now you tell us some thing you remember.

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F.W. Finally the wind let up a bit and we got into bed on the floor, on the springs and you know the wind had blown the dirt off the roof and the rain began to fall in our faces. (laughter) And you know, <gap> and I got so tickled. We lay there and laughed with that rain coming on us and we covered up our heads. (laughter)

E.R. One Saturday <gap> was going to have a school teacher come over and eat dinner with us, Saturday, you know. Do you remember her name? I don't. We didn't have a bit of water, not a drop of water and I said, "<gap> we've just got to have some water here." You said you'd stay there and do some things I wanted done and <gap> and I would go get the water. We had to haul it out five miles. I said to him, <gap> we've got to have water before I can cook dinner." So we went after that water.

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<unintelligible text>

(E.R.) And when we came back <gap> had wired the gate shut. I got out to open the gate and it was wired shut and I started to unwire it and she hollered over there and she said, <gap> if you open that gate I'll shoot you." She had a gun in her hand. I said, "You can just shoot me if you want to." You had to go up the line, well,...when this road was built I guess they thought it was on our place but it was on their place, the gate was, see. You had to go up about 30 feet and it would have been on ours. But this gate was there when we moved to this place. I said, "You can just shoot me because I'm out of water and I'm having company for dinner and I've got to have some water." And she said, "Well, you just try it and I'll shoot you." And I said, "Well, you just go ahead and shoot me before I unwire this gate because I'm going to unwire this and I'm going to drive through and then you and Herman can just settle this." We can build a road but I can't get out there and build a road

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now before I get this water." So I got out there and unwired that gate and drove through and she didn't shoot me or anything. She was mean but, you know, still she thought a lot of me but she hated I was going to take <gap> down to Fruita...no, I was going to Oklahoma to my mother's and <gap> couldn't go and I only had two little white dresses for <gap> and when I took one off and washed it I put the other one on.. I don't know how she heard it but she heard I was going home to see my mother and she knocked at the door one evening and I went to the door and she said, "Now <gap> I don't know whether you want these things or not but it will make me very happy if you'll take them." She had some little booties and two pair of little wool stockings and two little white dresses and they were embroidered and so pretty and she had a box of chicken and some stuff she wanted me to eat

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(E.R.) on the train. Now, you know, we didn't get along at all but somebody had told her I was going to see my mother and that's what she did. There's nobody so bad but what there's a little good about them somewhere. I'm really glad you called me this morning and found out where I was and it's the happiest time I've had for many and many a day. Even though we never see each other again we've got memories that we'll always have.

F.W. I have thought about you all through the years and how vividly I remember that year I had with you and it must have been fun all the way. Except for my homesickness....how I wanted to go home so bad at times...but you always made things pleasant for me and I did so appreciate that first year of my teaching. Well, September came and went at this little school and as I remember we got through it fine. I remember I used to be so impressed as I went home. <gap> place was about a half a mile away and it was so beautiful up

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there. We were in kind of a little valley and all around were mountains and they were covered with evergreen trees and it was really sort of primitive up there because many times I heard coyotes not far away as I went to school. One morning my little Indian boy came in and told me that he saw two does and a buck with great big horns when he was on his way to school. So it was a beautiful place to be and I'll never forget the warm September sunshine. October came in and the school district decided that I needed a new schoolhouse before I went into winter so the men all over the district started building this school. It was built up against the cliff about a quarter of a mile or a little more away from my present school. It had trees around us and on the north side and then the cliff just beyond and there was a little rise, a kind of a low hill,

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(F.W.) between the new schoolhouse and <gap> and <gap> house so that I couldn't see their house when I was at the schoolhouse. But it was not far from where they lived. And of course, I did all my janitor work after we got into the school, making the fires, and sweeping at night and so on and I didn't have far to walk to get to their place. After the men started building this building it was getting bigger and sturdier than my little schoolhouse. It was made of logs laid horizontally. They decided that the teacher and the children should have a dinner, so the women in the district.... there were not very many, of course, all got together and planned this dinner. And the men laid long planks along for the table on sawhorses I guess. And one day at noon we walked up about a quarter of a mile....it wasn't up where the schoolhouse was being built...but down toward the road where they could unload the food. And I know that <gap> and <gap> had quite an argument before the dinner came off because <gap> began to say that she wasn't going...she would not go wherever <gap> was, because she always brought a freezer of

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ice cream and she opened it up and tasted it and then put the tablespoon after she tasted it right back in the ice cream and "puts it in her mouth again" and <gap> wasn't going to go any place and eat something where "she has been a sippin'." <gap> would beg her to go and finally she d decided to go when he told her she didn't have to eat the ice cream if she didn't want to. She could eat her own food. Well, these women, I would say there were about a half a dozen all told, they had the nicest food prepared and how we did enjoy it! But of course, we sat in the sun, the warm October sun and I wouldn't have missed a minute of school....cut the children out of any time at all. We had to hurry and eat so we

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